**Approved Minute: NCL Curriculum and Student Affairs and Outcomes Committee (CSAO)**

**12.30 pm 20 February 2023 in person at Cumbernauld Campus and via Zoom**

**Present:** David Winning (Chair), Dianne Dixon, Fraser Hainey, Kellyann McGraith, Christopher Moore, Barbara Philliben, Alan Sherry

**Apologies**: Tarryn Robertson (SLC Academic Staff Representative), Rahela Calin (SLCSA President)

**In attendance:** Ann Baxter, Jennifer Lowe, Sandra McLoughlan, Stella McManus, Ronnie Smith, Diane McGill, Penny Neish

1. **Chair’s welcome**

**2. Apologies:** as noted above

**3. Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

**4. Minute of the CSAO meeting on 14 November 2022**

The Minutes were agreed.

**5. Matters arising**

All such matters are included on the agenda for this meeting.

**Regional business**

**6. ROA**

**6.1 ROA Implementation Update**

Ann Baxter (AB) advised the CSAO:

The draft ROA was submitted to the Lanarkshire Board on 12 December and was approved for submission to SFC. The ROA was submitted later that day.

A meeting to discuss the draft ROA is scheduled for 14 March with SFC: Emma Roberts (Outcome Agreement Manager) and Keith Coyne (Assistant Director for Outcomes).

Stella McManus (SMcM) commented that collaboration on producing this ROA had been a positive experience and had worked well. The combined submission was within the 15-page limit set by SFC.

**6.2** **KPI report**

AB spoke to her paper.

For the 2022-23 academic year the College has a credit target of 131,305 credits (includes 593 Foundation Apprenticeships credits).

At the time of preparing this report the College has recorded 111,937 credits (14.75% gap off target), however as the College continues to act to address the credit the number of credits recorded is 112,495 (14.33%). The national targets are expected to be published at the end of April, allowing NCL to measure its progress.

The Executive Board and Deans review the figures on a weekly basis; departments are working hard to address this gap and Spotlight on Curriculum meetings are taking place with the academic departments. The College has further activity planned from February 2023, including activity to mark the 10th anniversary of New College Lanarkshire.

Although the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) has provided colleges with a 2% positive or negative threshold tolerance against their credit target, there is always the potential if colleges underachieve, that credit targets could be reviewed.

Barbara Philliben (BP) asked if there were any specific areas of concern. AB advised that there are concerns about Education and Counselling, Dental Health and Social Care, and the Lanarkshire Business School.

The Staff Development Academy had not been designed to generate credits, however all possibilities were being considered.

Christopher Moore (CM) said that not achieving targets was a major concern for NCL and he, the Executive Board and all managers are focusing on ways to close the current gap. It is a priority objective for the College.

**6.3 SLC Curriculum Quality activity update**

Stella McManus (SMcM) spoke to her paper and highlighted:

* The College is working actively to meet its credit target of 48,812, and is seeking to address the current gap of circa 3,000 credits. In a similar way to last year additional activity is being planned to meet the target, although the SFC has allowed for more flexibility with a 2% negative or positive tolerance being applied.
  + Official notification of the annual engagement visit by Education Scotland: His Majesty’s Inspectorate of Education has been received and will take place the week commencing 6 March 2023.
  + Retention has dropped slightly to circa 93%, with curriculum teams working hard to support learners to remain on course.
* South Lanarkshire College in partnership with Developing the Young Workforce Lanarkshire and East Dunbartonshire will host a “Step into Future Jobs” event during Scottish Apprenticeship Week on 8 March 2023. The event will see several local employers come together to support Future Green Jobs, including Morrisons Construction, the Energy Skills Partnership, Fuel Change, Zero Waste Scotland and the Circular Economy. It highlights the College focus on Retrofit Covering, Insulating Building Materials and Renewable Technologies, showcasing pathways that young people can follow.
* HND Legal Services Students had an invaluable insight into court life in December 2022 when they visited Hamilton Sheriff Court. The students were able to observe court procedures, court proceedings and meet a Sheriff who was sitting on the day of the visit. The visit links into the unit of Advocacy Skills which the students are currently studying.
* Retention 2022-23: As at 30 January 2023 retention has decreased by 4.8% since November 2022. Intervention and support actions continue to take place by Curriculum Areas to support students to remain on their courses. Enrolments have also significantly increased by 775 with more students starting courses in January 2023. The key focus remains to improve attainment rates especially for those students on FT FE (Full Time Further Education) programmes.

Retention remains strong. Recruitment is the issue.

SLC distributed an evaluation survey across the College which has provided useful feedback enabling increased focus on student support, particularly around advice and guidance. SLC is working to develop a more consistent approach across the College centred on middle managers. This will help to take the College forward.

DW asked if credit targets were a challenge to all colleges. CM advised that this is a sector-wide issue on which SFC is investigating the options, one of which is the reduction of credit targets. Colleges expect to hear the result of SFC’s deliberations when indicative funding is announced in March. Targets have to be met by 31 July.

Ronnie Smith (RS) asked if there were any colleges doing exceptionally well as regards their credit target and if so how their actions differed from the rest of the sector. CM said he understood that West Lothian College was on track to achieve its target.

BP asked how SFC was engaging with the sector. CM advised that the Colleges Scotland Principals’ Group was leading the engagement with SFC. There is a scheduled SFC Board meeting in March which will confirm the level of flexibility SFC will adopt; SFC is currently modelling a number of options. The Scottish Government’s manifesto target of 116 fte is driving the current target level. The sector is hoping for a different approach for 2023/24.

DW suggested that Modern Apprenticeships could perhaps fill some of the credit gap. AB said that MAs are capped and that Local Authorities are sending these students to college where-ever they can.

**7. SFC Transition Plan and Assigned College Update**

RS reported to the committee that following a meeting at senior level with SFC at the end of October 2022, a meeting with senior representatives of the Scottish Government earlier in 2023, and in the context of regular and on-going discussions with the Chair and Interim Principal at SLC, the RSB had requested the revival of the Lanarkshire Transition Group (LTG) to address the issue of the de-assignation of SLC from the Region.

Pre-COVID the LTG had met twice. It’s work on de-assignation was at a very early stage and had not progressed since COVID. RS said that he expected the revived LTG to be chaired at a senior level by SFC, and to comprise the Chairs and Principals of both colleges, as well as senior representation from the Scottish Government. The remit would be to consider the format of the administration of the Region and the partnership arrangement between the two colleges. RS said that he anticipated that the legal process alone to change the current legislation, in particular The Lanarkshire Order, would take 12-18 months.

DW asked if there would need to be a consultation process to which RS responded that this was currently being considered. RS added that in order for both colleges to move forward they needed to separate, however both will continue to work together to get the best deal for the people of Lanarkshire.

CM asked Alan Sherry (AS) if he had any information he could share on the timing of the appointment of the new Principal for SLC. AS advised that a recruitment pack is being prepared and that discussions with SFC are on-going.

**8. Student Association Reports**

**8.1 SLCSA**: In Rahela’s absence SMcM highlighted items in her report:

* Refreshers’ Week had taken place over 2 days at the beginning of February. A variety of stall holders came onto campus across both days. The SA had hosted a stall to provide information on the SA’s roles and activities. The Events Management students took the lead in organising fun activities. Stall holders included Police Scotland, Samaritans, Citizens Advice Scotland, Money Matters, Who Cares? Scotland, LAMH among many others.
* Promotion of the Refreshers’ event took place across various channels including Student News4U, social media channels and emails to staff across the College. The recent Student News4U also featured a welcome back to existing students
* SLCSA has been working in partnership with the Marketing Team as part of the December Open Day with student volunteers really enjoying their experience.
* Free Soup & Sandwich and Free Breakfast for all students: The SA is promoting both initiatives to help combat student poverty and improve health and wellbeing. Following student feedback, SLCSA has widened promotion of the service to include more regular signposting on social media, as well as displaying the dates on the large video screen in the College. Additionally, the SLCSA team has created monthly posters which outline the various dates that soup and sandwich and breakfasts are available. As a result, SLCSA has seen an uptake in the number of servings being provided to students, with an increase of nearly 200 servings across both offerings in November alone.
* SLCSA is very grateful to have been allocated an additional £3,000 from the SLC Foundation to allow for the continuation and expansion of this support to the students. By the end of December, they had supported over 3,397 servings of free breakfast and soup and sandwich. This initiative undoubtedly benefits student mental health and wellbeing, retention, and engagement.
* The Student Larder was established solely for students to access and was originally located in the SLCSA office due to the overwhelmingly generous donations received. Due to the success of this initiative, it has been decided to make it a permanent fixture at the SA office where students can collect food at any time they wish. Sustainable SLC bags are also provided for students to use and aid with discretion for anyone collecting items.
* 16 Days of Action National Campaign: SLCSA and the College took part in the 16 Days of Action every year to tackle Gender Based Violence (GBV) and highlight the work being undertaken by the College and SA on this. Alongside posters and leaflets being available in the College the SLCSA invited Women’s Aid and Lanarkshire Rape Crisis to host an information stall on campus, with separate safe spaces available for anyone who wished to speak with them confidentially. SLCSA also hosted a drop-in "Coffee, Cake and Chat" event for students who wanted to learn more about the support available for those affected by gender-based violence. SLCSA was delighted so many students attended the event. As part of the commitment to securing a future in which GBV no longer exists, the Student Services team and SA President attended the annual EmilyTest Conference in support of the College’s zero-based tolerance approach.
* The SA held another stall promoting the older style of hoodies during the cold weather with most of them selling out nearly instantly. Due to the cost-of-living crisis these were sold at a reduced cost of £3 per hoodie and students were glad of the opportunity to purchase the garments.

DW thanked SMcM for reporting the range of activities of the SLCSA to the CSAO.

**8.2 NCL SA**: KMcG introduced the NCLSA report and highlighted a number of new and on-going activities being undertaken by the SA. KMcG mentioned in particular:

* Re-Freshers‘23 was focused on providing a warm and welcoming experience for new and existing students. Encouraging all to have fun, relax and practice self-care, as well as gain access to information and resources that might help them during their time at NCL.
* Student Pantry: Throughout the winter period, the NCL community came together to support NCL students during times of financial hardship. Raising funds and donating goods to NCL’s food pantry initiative. The success of this initiative has allowed the team to explore how the initiative can be sustained long-term through external funding as the flow of donations can only keep the pantries stocked for more than a few days. 5 opportunities have been identified National Lottery Awards for All Scotland, National Lottery Improving Lives, National Lottery Young Start, ASDA Foundation, Tesco Community Grants; NCLSA will work with External Funding to start applications.
* LGBT Charter and LGBTQ+ History Month: As the deadline of the LGBT Charter approaches, the SA is working closely with the College’s EDI Advisor to help gather evidence to achieve the charter. February marks the beginning of LGBT History Month and the SA have been working with the brand team to showcase historical moments that mark a time in LGBT history.
* Strategic Plan: The Students’ Association and Learner Engagement Team completed the strategic plan for the SA and was commended by NUS on how far it has come in the last 2 years.

This strategy outlines the SA’s priorities and provides clear guidance and direction towards building a strong effective Student Association.

* Student mental health: there is a range of on-going work around this issue which will be continued and developed by the NCLSA in the future.

BP asked if the NCLSA had sought any links with NHS Lanarkshire in relation to support for students with mental health issues. KMcG thanked BP said she would follow this up.

***Action: KMcG to make contact with NHS Lanarkshire in relation to support for students with mental health issues.***

**9. Principals’ overviews**

**SLC:**

AS advised that SLC is working to resubmit its bid for the EmilyTest Charter. This is a Scottish Government-funded charity working to improve gender-based violence (GBV) prevention, intervention and support in education. This work at SLC is being led by SLCSA.

AS said that the College was engaging with local MSPs and MPs on the work of the college and was planning a number of community-based events focusing on new jobs, not solely green jobs. In connection with this SLC has strengthened its links with the CPP around learning and development with a view to community capacity building.

SLC has recently received £200k from the Scottish Government to fund heating panels for the roof of the building at East Kilbride. This will go some way towards helping the College achieve its net zero target.

**NCL:**

* CM reported that NCL is celebrating its 10th Anniversary this year with a programme of activities to mark the merger of Cumbernauld, Motherwell and Coatbridge colleges.
* CM said that one of the events was the launch of the NCL Education Foundation (EF) on 31 March 2023 with an event at Coatbridge Campus hosted by Elaine C Smith and a performance by NCL Musical Theatre students. One of the aims of the Foundation is to provide complementary breakfasts for students. The current uptake is around 3.5k a month. The NCL ALF had made some funds available together with private donations. CM advised that Lady Haughey had agreed to be the Patron of the NCL EF.
* NCL will be hosting 3 community open days in the form of a festival of ideas to showcase the College. A leaflet ‘Celebrate’ will be distributed widely to households across Lanarkshire launching a range of free short courses both business-related and ‘for interest’ topics.
* The first Lanarkshire school/college summit had taken place recently. The event had been attended by heads, deputes and guidance teachers as well as representatives from the local authority. College Heads of Department presented the curriculum following which a lot of useful discussion took place. The event was very successful.
* NCL is expecting a visit from the Scottish Government in the coming week to debate how the College will cope with the funding situation and the credit challenge facing the College. CM invited SLC representatives to attend this meeting. CM said that there had already been staff meetings on this within NCL so that staff were aware of the financial difficulties facing NCL and that the college could face a £4m clawback if the credit target is not met.
* January recruitment was exceptionally good with 800-900 new students. CM commented that NCL had run an innovative recruitment campaign which had paid off. A number of short courses have been offered to North Lanarkshire Council and to NHS Lanarkshire; more than 550 have signed up.
* In discussion with staff more than 100 programmes have been suggested and these are included in the ‘Celebrate’ brochure. CM said that this project supports NCL’s move from dependence on school leavers and focuses more on adult education. There is a huge appetite among staff to engage with adult learners. CM suggested to Fraser Hainey (FH) that should he wish to organise an event or an introduction to College session, CM would be happy to meet him to discuss this.

***Action: FH to consider organising an ‘introduction to college’ session for members of the community who take up the short course offer.***

RS congratulated CM on the breadth of the courses offered in the brochure.

DW asked if the re-aligning of the Professional Development Services had been completed. CM confirmed this was the case and added that further discussion had been held in the Executive Board earlier that day on local organisation in the directorates.

**NCL Business**

**10. NCL Committee and Activity update**

Jennifer Lowe (JL) spoke to her paper and highlighted the following:

* **Education Scotland Progress Visit:** The Education Scotland College HMI Progress Visit (PV) took place on 14th, 15th and 16th December 2022. The College received a satisfactory outcome with some areas for development. Dental, Health and Social Care, Sport and The Lanarkshire Institute of Science and Technology are being considered for an Education Scotland College HMI Highly Effective Practice award**.**
* **Dean for Learning and Teaching:** Interviews for the Dean for Learning and Teaching Took place earlier this month. The successful applicant was Barry Skea. This is a very positive and welcome appointment for NCL
* **Spotlight on Curriculum:** Academic Heads of Department, and their teams will attend Spotlight on Curriculum meetings commencing 6 February to discuss the planned activity for AY 22/23, target setting, recruitment to target and early withdrawals.
* **Staff Development Academy:** The College continues to focus on Staff Development supporting and delivering professional learning infrastructure and activities.
* **Staff Development Activities:** The SDA has developed, in collaboration with the academic departments, a targeted portfolio of short courses for the College community. These include a suite of programmes aligned to:
  + Investing in NCL’s wellbeing;
  + Offer professional advancement opportunities at NCL;
  + Digital NCL.
* **Professional Development process:** Over the last few months NCL has engaged with staff about their experiences of the 2021/2022 PDD process. Overall the feedback received has been very positive. In addition, more guidance will be provided.
* **Complaints handling and reporting:** There were six formal complaints received in Quarter 2 of 2022/2023. All were satisfactorily responded to within the College Complaints Procedures required by the Scottish Public-Sector Ombudsman (SPSO) timeframes.

**College Committee Updates**

* **Learning and Teaching:** NCL is working in partnership with the Casablanca Chamber of Commerce to offer an internationally recognised one-year Advanced Certificate course in Business. This qualification provides either a direct route to the Advanced Diploma in Business or a degree programme at a Scottish University or a pathway to employment. The first cohort is due to commence August 23.
* **Sustainability Group:** Public Bodies Climate Change Report was submitted in 30th November 2022.

**CDN College Awards**

Employer Connections Award: NCL was Commended for its initiative Pathways to Textile Care and Warehousing

Health and Wellbeing Award: NCL was Highly Commended for its project Mental Health and Wellbeing Recovery Plan

Marketing and Communications Awards: NCL was Commended for its You’re Not Alone campaign.

**WorldSkills UK**

NCL is 6th in the UK rankings. CM commented that unlike the rest of the UK, the Scottish Government will not give any financial support to WorldSkills which is looking for central funding from the colleges involved. CM said that regrettably NCL is not in a position to be able to contribute. AS said that SLC has made a contribution of £6k.

**General Committee Business**

**11. Approval of publication of Committee papers**

1. Agenda for the CSAO meeting 20 February 2023
2. Minutes of the CSAO meeting 14 November 2022
3. NCL KPI update
4. *SLC Curriculum and Quality activity update – via the SLC website*
5. NCL Students’ Association Report
6. *SLC Students’ Association Report – via the SLC website*
7. NCL Activity Update

**12. AOB**

AB advised on **SQA Appeals**: A free and direct appeals service, which will give all learners the right to request a review of their marked exam papers, will be available later this year, SQA has confirmed. The services have been developed following an extensive evaluation of the exams and appeals services that were in place in 2022. The Appeals 2023 service will be different from the service used last year, with no requirement for alternative assessment evidence. Instead, learners who believe their final grade is incorrect will be able to request a review of their SQA-marked exams and coursework.

SQA will also continue to provide a priority service for learners who need their appeal outcomes quickly to confirm a conditional offer for university, further education, training, or employment. This will also be free of charge.

**13. Date of next meeting:**

The date of the next meeting of the CSAO Committee is **Monday 15 May** at 12.30 at Cumbernauld Campus and via Zoom.